

Minutes of the East Greenwich School Committee

Tuesday, April 24, 2012

Archie Cole Middle School Cafetorium

100 Cedar Avenue

East Greenwich, RI 02818

7:00p.m. Regular Meeting

Those in attendance were Dr. Deidre Gifford, Chair; Mr. Robert Durant, Vice-Chair; Mr. David Green; Mrs. Mary Ellen Winters; Mr. Jack Sommer, and Mrs. Susan Records. Mr. Paul Martin was absent. Also present were Dr. Victor Mercurio, Superintendent; Mrs. Paula Dillon, Assistant Superintendent, Mrs. Maryanne Crawford, Director of Administration, and Mr. Carlos Zambrano, Director of Technology/Systems Analyst.

7:07p.m. Regular Meeting

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Deidre Gifford, Chair.

I. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag

The meeting commenced with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

II. Public Comments

Mr. Ned Cleary of the Diamond Baseball group expressed his thanks to the School Committee for having faith in their group and giving them the opportunity to build the dug-outs on the EGHS field. The job is complete and the group is one payment away from full payment to the contractor.

Ms. Jen Congdon implored the School Committee to work with the

police department and the Town Council to get a school resource officer back at the high school for next year.

III. Approval of Minutes

a. Regular and executive for 4/3/12

On a motion by Mr. Green, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 6-0 to approve the regular and executive minutes for 4/3/12.

IV. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Mercurio noted the EGHS dug-outs are complete and look wonderful. He thanked all who were involved in the project. Sr. Project is taking place tomorrow April 25, 2012. Mrs. Gilden, students, and faculty have done a lot of work to prepare for judging. Dr. Mercurio will participate in tomorrow's judging. The Meadowbrook Principal posting closed on April 12th. A selection committee is being formed and will meet next week. A recommendation will be presented at a June meeting.

V. School Committee Concerns

There were no concerns.

VI. Action Items

a. Retirement- Ann Caito, EGHS Secretary

On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 6-0 to accept the retirement. Dr. Gifford expressed thanks to Mrs. Caito noting she has been a big help to parents, an asset to the school, and will be missed by all. She will be recognized at a future meeting in June.

b. Sabbatical request for 2012-2013 Christina O'Day

Ms. O'Day is waiting for a response from EGEF regarding her grant request. On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 6-0 to table this item.

c. Grade Configuration

The potential grade three move is tied to the budget. There is also an alternative on the table to move only the third graders from Meadowbrook. More time is needed to examine staffing and to discuss the budget with the town.

d. Resource Officer-EGHS

This item is also connected to the upcoming budget and cannot be finalized until the joint meeting takes place.

e. Budget 2013

The School Committee presented the budget to the Town Council and was asked to cut an additional \$400,000. The school district looked at a number of options to meet this request, but further cuts will have an adverse impact on educational programs. The School Committee has a joint budget meeting with the Town Council on Monday, April 30, 2012. Mr. Green urged members of the audience to attend the budget discussion. The grade configuration cost (\$125,000) and the resource officer costs were not included in the budget.

VII. Presentation-RIDE Innovation Powered by Technology Grant

Mrs. Dillon and Mr. Zambrano discussed the technology grant noting a major requirement is to target schools with financial need and also the ability to sustain the program. Mrs. Dillon is targeting the two Title I Schools: Frenchtown and Eldredge. If awarded, the grant

totals \$450,000 which will be used to purchase technology for Frenchtown and Eldredge classrooms and library. The infrastructure (routers and wireless access) will also be enhanced and professional development will be offered. Dr. Gifford asked Mrs. Dillon and Mr. Zambrano to check the technology budget to ensure there are no duplications of purchases.

VIII. Discussion Items

a. Update on Meadowbrook bid

Dr. Gifford discussed the concerns raised by Meadowbrook parents. She noted there was a communication sent out via the Meadowbrook list serv to discuss these concerns. Another list serv notice was sent today. Mr. Sean Sullivan of SBS was present to discuss three phasing options. Mr. Sullivan discussed the current project cost which is \$3,307,000 with a total budget of \$4,451,000 which was approved by the Town Council on September 26, 2011. Phasing Plan, Revision A was discussed which will complete the majority of the work during the summers and when students are not in the building. The cost for Revision A is projected at \$3,727,024, which is an additional cost of \$420,024 over the original contracted plan. Phasing Plan, Revision B which calls for vacating the building and relocating the students does not have a projected cost because there is no available location. Dr. Mercurio spoke with Mayor Avedesian of Warwick regarding Potowamut School. To date, he has not heard from the person in charge of the grounds. Since this school has been turned over to the municipality it could take \$250,000- \$400,000 to bring the school up to code.

Mr. Sullivan said the work is scheduled to begin on June 20, 2012. The school will be cleaned out in 3-4 days and then the abatement process will start. Mr. Sullivan discussed the air quality tests which will take place in affected and unaffected areas. The testing results will be made available. Mr. Sullivan was asked about the conditions of the classrooms for the start of school. He said they intend to have the floor finished, but the worst case scenario is there may be concrete floors. Millwork, cabinets, and door frames may not be completed. Plastic bins will be used for storage.

Dr. Gifford opened up the floor for parents to speak. She asked parents to give specific feedback about the phasing options. Meg Simms expressed concerns about classroom set-up and the availability of materials for teachers. She also asked if the new principal will have experience with construction. Dr. Mercurio said the principal will have experience. Cheryl Osborne discussed her concerns with the initial Phasing Option because students will be present during abatement. Kathleen Johnson, Co-Chair of Meadowbrook PTG, stated her preference of Phasing Plan, Revision A. She also asked about guarantees with abatement. Mrs. Johnson also submitted a petition to the School Committee which was drafted prior to knowing the phasing options. She also questioned whether the workers are licensed. Dr. Gifford noted the contractor is licensed, not the individual workers. Abatement workers are certified and their work is checked by a third party hygienist. Mr. Sullivan noted the

construction schedule is a work in progress. It will be made available when complete. He also stated he is confident the abatement process will be done during the summer. Mr. Sullivan noted there are charges if the work is not completed as specified in the contract. Tom O'Brien asked about record checks (national record check or fingerprinting) for workers in the building. Each School Committee member was polled for their choice of phasing options. All members noted their choice is Revision B.

Tina Brown voiced her support for Revision B. Jennifer Madden asked if a Meadowbrook parent can sit on the Building Committee. Dr. Gifford discussed the Building Committee configuration noting the chair has resigned and they are in the process of selecting a new chair. Dr. Areglado was on the committee but has since resigned. Interim principal, Dr. D'Acchioli, will attend meetings specific to Meadowbrook. Dr. Gifford will use the list serv to solicit a Meadowbrook parent for the committee. Mrs. Madden also asked questions about the air quality and discussed "Tools for Schools." She noted she is opposed to renovation while school is in session and urged the Committee to vote for Revision B. Dr. Gifford discussed air quality concerns and "Tools for Schools" with Bob Vanderslice at the R.I. Department of Health. She asked Mrs. Madden to discuss "Tools for Schools" with Dr. Mercurio. Brenda Mendes voiced her concerns regarding mold exposure and asked what plan of action will take place to monitor the mold. Mr. Sullivan said the mold will be removed. Ms. Mendes also asked about testing for mold

when the students are in school. Dr. Gifford said a reasonable testing regiment will be established. She also said she discussed this with the Department of Health and noted a hygienist will be on site.

David Decawich stated he prefers the third option, plan B. He also urged the Committee to reserve funds to accommodate any change request. He also asked the Committee to examine the review sheets again. He also asked about the order of demolition and discussed his concern regarding negative pressure and the possibility of the seals leaking. He also asked if the grade configuration is included in the budget. Mr. Sullivan said the order of demolition is not defined yet and will be decided by Tower and the engineers. He also noted containment will separate the various areas and does not think that is a concern. Kate Goldman expressed her disappointment with the lack of information for Phasing Plan, Revision B (vacating the building, relocate students). She expressed her preference of this option. Ms. Goldman also asked about chemicals and dust and suggested using a Gant chart. She urged the Committee to consider option #3. She also asked about grade configuration and when the Committee will decide if grade three will move. Mr. Green stated there are no alternate locations. If Potowamut was an option, it may have the same issues as Meadowbrook (moisture, mold). Dr. Gifford said the health department can give the district guidelines on indoor air quality. Dr. Gifford also stated that SBS has been a good partner and are very good at laying out the construction schedule and reporting monthly. A construction schedule will be developed and

SBS, the Building Committee, and the School Committee will oversee the project. Mr. Durant noted that contingencies are always considered and SBS has a good track record of getting work done and reporting back to the School Committee. Mr. Durant encouraged all community members to come to the School Committee meetings.

Amy Dator, Co-Chair, Meadowbrook PTG asked when parents can expect a vote on the phasing options and the grade configuration. Dr. Gifford said the School Committee will deliberate after all community members speak. Keith Callahan encouraged the Committee to support Revision B. Heather Bristol asked if phasing option 1 can be off the table and also discussed phasing option 3. Bambi Lukens also asked if phasing option 1 can be off the table. She urged the Committee to consider Phasing Plan, Revision A or Revision B. Dr. Gifford and Mr. Durant both noted they understand the concern with the current phasing plan, but the Committee was comfortable with their decision and health and safety concerns were not ignored in the current plan.

Michael Zarella expressed his support for Revision A and asked about the timetable for removing asbestos. Mr. Sullivan said it should be done mid-summer and there are back-up plans (including using a generator) to get the work done. Steven Brusini would also like the current plan off the table and noted Revision B would have been a good option. An unidentified parent asked about the

guarantees if the work is not finished on time and about a construction schedule. Mr. Sullivan said a milestone chart will be provided as requested in the contract. They will also provide a Gant chart, which is not provided until there is discussion with the subcontractors. He added this practice is an industry standard. Dr. Gifford explained there is not a school building available for Revision B. She asked if anyone in attendance has a suggestion for a building; please send it to the Committee. Dr. Gifford asked Cheryl Osborne what specific concerns could be addressed with the students out of the building (Revision B) rather than using Revision A (complete the majority of the work during the summers). Ms. Osborne has concerns with timelines and if shortcuts will be taken. She asked if portables are an option with Revision B. Dr. Gifford explained there is no rush on the project. The one item that needs to be completed during the summer is the abatement. There will be finish work and possible tile work that may need to be completed. Air quality testing will be done according to standards. The construction schedule will be available to the School Committee and the public.

Dr. Mercurio discussed the option of using portables, but noted issues with the timetable and concerns about moving students. Mr. Durant noted that Revision B was considered. However, it is not financially or educationally viable. Mike McCauley questioned whether students could be moved to New England Institute of Technology. Mr. Durant made a motion to approve Phasing Plan #2-Revision A in the amount of \$3,727,024. Mrs. Winters seconded the

motion and the Committee voted 6-0 to approve Phasing Plan #2-Revision A. Mrs. Records stated that she does support Revision B, but there are no school buildings available. Mr. Durant and Mr. Green noted they were okay with the current phasing plan. Mr. Green explained he has years of experience with abatement processes and was in favor of the current option. Mrs. Winters stated she is comfortable with Revision A and reminded all that SBS renovated the EGHS science labs over the course of a summer and the job was completed on time.

Dr. Gifford noted the School Committee is hosting the first of four forums this Thursday, April 26th at Cole. This forum will discuss aligning educational talent with student need. David Abbott, the Deputy Commissioner at the Rhode Island Department of Education will talk about the Basic Education Plan (BEP). Dr. Mercurio will discuss the teacher contract and the BEP. Dr. Gifford urged all community members to attend. Dr. Gifford thanked all for their input and stated she is happy to hold a meeting with Meadowbrook parents and the Department of Health.

IX. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Durant, which was seconded by Mrs. Winters, the Committee voted 6-0 to adjourn at 9:58 p.m.

CHRISTINE DIMEGLIO

SECRETARY